

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-18 (Canceled)

19. **(Currently amended)** A surgical tool comprising a cutting edge that forms an outermost surface of the tool, the cutting edge having fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 15 nanometers in size.
20. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting edge surface has no pores that are greater than about 15 nanometers in size.
21. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting edge surface has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 12 nanometers in size.
22. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 21, wherein the cutting edge surface has no pores that are greater than about 12 nanometers in size.
23. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting edge surface has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 10 nanometers in size.

24. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 23, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has no pores that are greater than about 10 nanometers in size.
25. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 5 nanometers in size.
26. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 25, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has no pores that are greater than about 5 nanometers in size.
27. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 5 angstroms in size.
28. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises carbide.
29. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 28, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises nickel binder carbide.
30. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 28, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises tungsten carbide.

31. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 30, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises nickel binder tungsten carbide.
32. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 31, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises nickel binder tungsten carbide having a composition of about 88.5 percent tungsten carbide and about 11.5 percent nickel alloy binder.
33. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 32, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 12 nanometers in size.
34. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 32, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 10 nanometers in size.
35. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 32, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 5 nanometers in size.

36. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 32, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ has fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 5 angstroms in size.
37. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 32, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises at least one of titanium carbide, tantalum carbide, vanadium carbide, zirconium carbide, hafnium carbide, cerium carbide, manganese carbide, thorium carbide, and niobium carbide.
38. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 32, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises cobalt binder carbide.
39. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises a material having a density of at least about 14 g/cm³.
40. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 39, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises a material having a density of about 14 g/cm³ to about 17 g/cm³.
41. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 40, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises a material having a density of about 15 g/cm³.

42. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 40, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises a material having a density of about 14.3 to 14.9 g/cm³.
43. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, further comprising a body portion to which the cutting ~~edge surface~~ is affixed.
44. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 43, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ and the body portion are made of different materials.
45. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 44, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises tungsten carbide.
46. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 45, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ comprises nickel binder tungsten carbide.
47. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 19, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ is integrally formed with a body portion.
48. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 47, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ and the body portion are made of tungsten carbide.

49. **(Currently amended)** The surgical tool of claim 48, wherein the cutting ~~edge surface~~ and the body portion are made of nickel binder tungsten carbide.
50. **(Currently amended)** A surgical tool comprising:
a body portion; and
a cutting edge forming an outermost surface of the tool and being affixed to the body portion, the cutting ~~edge surface~~ being made of nickel binder tungsten carbide having a density of at least 14 g/cm^3 , and the cutting ~~edge surface~~ having fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 5 nanometers in size.
51. **(Currently amended)** A surgical tool comprising:
a body portion made of nickel binder tungsten carbide having a density of at least 14 g/cm^3 ; and
a cutting edge forming an outermost surface of the tool and being integrally formed with the body portion, the cutting ~~edge surface~~ being made of nickel binder tungsten carbide having a density of at least 14 g/cm^3 , and the cutting ~~edge surface~~ having fewer than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 5 nanometers in size.
52. **(Currently amended)** A method of making the surgical tool defined by claim 19, comprising:

machining the cutting edge; ~~surface~~; and
polishing the cutting edge ~~surface~~ until it has fewer than about 10 pores per square
centimeter that are greater than about 15 nanometers in size.

53. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 52, wherein the cutting edge ~~surface~~ comprises carbide, and the machining step comprises grinding the carbide with a diamond wheel.
54. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 53, wherein the polishing step comprises rubbing the cutting edge ~~surface~~ with diamond polishing compound.
55. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 54, wherein the polishing step comprises honing the cutting edge ~~surface~~ to a mirror-like finish.
56. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 55, further comprising affixing the cutting edge ~~surface~~ to a body portion of the surgical tool.
57. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 52, wherein the polishing step comprises honing the cutting edge ~~surface~~ to a mirror-like finish.
58. (Previously presented) A method of making the surgical tool defined by claim 19, comprising processing the cutting edge with hot isostatic pressing so that it has fewer

than about 10 pores per square centimeter that are greater than about 15 nanometers in size.

59. (Previously presented) A method of making the surgical tool defined by claim 19, comprising forming the cutting edge with fine grade carbide particles.
60. (**Currently amended**) A method of making the surgical tool defined by claim 43, comprising affixing the cutting ~~edge surface~~ to a body portion of the surgical tool.
61. (Previously presented) A method of preventing prion transmission to a subject during a surgical procedure, the method comprising performing the surgical procedure on the subject with a surgical tool as set forth in claim 19, the surgical tool having been conventionally sterilized.